

ANS and AP (Portugal)

With the event of the COVID-19, the Armed Forces were quickly faced with increasing requests for personnel, infrastructure, logistical means and even specific actions, by the most diverse entities and institutions.

It was thus that, in spite of the heavy reduction in personnel and cutbacks on equipment during the last years, but in full respect of the coordination rules established for the intervention in this type of situation, Armed Forces were corresponding, in the right measure of the existing capabilities.

In this context, reinforced the Armed Forces Hospital (HFAR) with health personnel and with the assembly of a module of the Sanitary Group specifically adapted to the present emergency. Armed Forces were a decisive contributor in setting up several improvised field hospitals across the country.

Raised some dozens of reception centers on the continent and in the Autonomous Regions (Madeira and Azores). Set up dozens of tents for sorting and made available more than three thousand beds, essentially at the request of city councils.

The teams and the subsequent production of the Military Laboratory for Chemical and Pharmaceutical Products tripled, while simultaneously distributing material from the national strategic reserve under the responsibility of the Directorate-General for Health.

In addition, obtained technical certification from the Military Laboratory Unit for Biological and Chemical Defense, and began to perform complete confirmation tests for COVID-19. Armed Forces also carried out decontamination of civil and military nursing homes.

Participated in distribution of food to homeless people mainly in the Lisbon area, but also in some other locations. With the Geospatial Information Center, supported the Central Administration of the Health System in the georeferencing and integrated management of the 99 health establishments under the responsibility of that entity.

Through the Research, Development and Innovation Center of the Military Academy, is studying and developing hospital protection equipment. In charge of a new task, a specifically appointed management team is planning to survey, as soon as possible, the COVID-19 Military Support Center, with a maximum capacity of 150 beds, in Lisbon-Belém (a former military hospital for tropical and infectious diseases that was closed in 2014 by political decision of a previous government).

There are also several teams from the Psychological Intervention Modules, which have already developed actions within their competence with groups of affected people.

This volume of tasks, in the national territory, did not diminish the effort of hundreds of portuguese soldiers, engaged outside the national territory. For all of them, is required an effort to safeguard their integrity vis-à-vis COVID 19, also securing their current support in theatres, as well as their families, in Portugal.

The set of multiple and diversified actions developed by the Armed Forces in recent weeks, attests to the spirit of mission, competence, versatility and generosity of all those who serve in this institution, in spite of all difficulties and lack of personnel and equipments.

It is foreseeable that many, in the near future, will be subject to greater risks in fulfilling the tasks assigned. Thus, it is of utmost importance that they are endowed with the appropriate protective equipment, just as they must follow the appropriate self-protection attitudes oriented towards the mission.

It is of great importance to insist on the goal of providing everyone with sufficient protection, knowing the situations they will face.

Today, April 12 th 2020, due to Covid-19, there are in Portugal 16.585 infected people and unfortunately 504 diseased.